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attorney's clerk. On one side we have the absence of all historical and documentary evidence in the affirmative; on the other, several years of the poet's life unaccounted for, and his frequent use, not only of general, but of technical words and phrases appertaining to the legal science. Lord Campbell has analyzed the plays with this question in view, and here presents a large array of citations which might seem to authorize an affirmative answer. Of these, there is no one, there are no half-dozen, which would establish even a probable case; but the argument is in its nature cumulative, and in its entirety has no little weight. The author declines giving a positive opinion of his own, and we are disposed to believe that his readers will for the most part be equally unwilling to affirm and to deny the alleged fact of the great dramatist's legal education. He may have been an attorney's clerk; but we doubt whether it can be proved that he was one.

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- 26.—*Rambles among Words: their Poetry, History, and Wisdom.*  
By WILLIAM SWINTON. New York: Charles Scribner. 1859.  
12mo. pp. 302.

THIS book, though less carefully digested than Trench's volume on the "Study of Words," covers more ground, and brings to light a larger assortment of the verbal curiosities of the English language. It illustrates, with equal aptness and copiousness, the wealth of history, poetry, and wisdom that often lies in a fossil state in the origin or structure of a word. It is somewhat desultory, and sometimes repetitious, but these faults are more than neutralized by the patent evidence of the author's diligent research, careful thought, and felicitous fancy. The reader will find it never dull, often amusing, always instructive.

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- 27.—*Ethel's Love-Life: a Novel.* By MARGARET J. M. SWEAT.  
New York: Rudd and Carleton. 1859. 12mo. pp. 232.

THIS book is not a novel in the common sense of the term. Its form is that of a series of letters from Ethel Sunderland to her last beloved, her betrothed and expectant bridegroom. She gives him her own heart-history, in connection with her previous loves, and describes the successive stages and agencies in the development of the tenderness, strength, and depth of a true and noble woman's nature. The work is introspective in its whole character; and, while we by no means suppose that the incidents are recorded from experience, in a still pro-

founder sense Mrs. Sweat must have given us an autobiography, for there is much in her narrative which is beyond the reach of fiction, and for which remembered or persistent consciousness alone could have furnished the materials. The style is natural, that is to say, not such a style as any young lady ever employed in writing to a young man, but such as would of necessity be adopted by the somewhat intensified and idealized heroines of fiction, if they lived and wrote love-letters. It requires a finer and higher art by far to produce a work like this, than to jot down the gossip and incidents that form the staple of an ordinary novel; and Mrs. Sweat has fully justified her choice of so difficult a department of fictitious literature, by the genuine vein of pure, tender, and elevated sentiment which pervades, or rather which is, Ethel's story.

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28. — *Portrait of a Christian, drawn from Life. A Memoir of Maria Elizabeth Clapp.* By her Pastor, CHANDLER ROBBINS, D.D., Minister of the Second Church. Fourth Edition. Boston: Crosby, Nichols, & Co. 1859. 16mo. pp. 135.

MISS CLAPP was, for a large part of her life, a teacher in one of the primary schools of this city, and at the same time an earnest and devoted Sunday-school teacher, and a worker, to the utmost of her ability, in every good cause. Worn out by her incessant labors, she died, after a lingering and painful illness, in August, 1857. In her early youth she made the irrevocable consecration of heart and life to her Saviour, and in few even of those whose names are synonymes for sainthood in all Christendom have the strength and beauty of the Christian character shone with so pure a lustre as in her life and writings. Her pastor, in his eminent fitness for the pious task, has interwoven extracts from her letters and diary with his own sweet and touching narrative. The book is full of "instruction in righteousness," and we should pity the reader whom it did not profoundly impress with the reality and infinite moment of the truths, in whose might this modest, loving disciple lived and wrought, in whose comfort she endured and overcame.

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29. — *The Christian Graces. A Series of Lectures on 2 Peter i. 5-12.* By JOSEPH P. THOMPSON, Pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle Church. New York: Sheldon & Co. 1859. 12mo. pp. 280.

THE subject of these lectures is the "Choir of Graces" enumerated